

Washington Times - Wilson: Stop the runaway spending spree

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By Rep. Joe Wilson - The Washington Times

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American economist Milton Friedman once said, "The government solution to a problem is usually as bad as the problem." Friedman's statement is not only spot-on, it also was validated most recently by this administration's response to America's stagnant economic state.

More government spending to create more government jobs is not the way to get America's economy rolling once again. Ignoring this common-sense principle, Washington liberals promised the American people that a \$787 billion taxpayer-funded government investment would "stimulate" the economy. But that promise has been broken, and after 1 1/2 years, more than 3 million private-sector jobs have been lost and unemployment numbers continue to hover around 10 percent.

The result? Americans are having buyer's remorse.

I heard this frustration and concern from residents all across South Carolina's 2nd Congressional District at six town-hall meetings earlier this month. Hardworking citizens and concerned taxpayers across the midlands and Lowcountry came out to these community meetings in large numbers with ideas on how to stop the reckless government spending and create long-term private-sector jobs. If only the administration and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had had staff members there taking notes.

The most popular question and concern at these meetings was related to the cost of the government health care takeover. In addition to focusing on the overall debt burden it will leave to our children and grandchildren, residents wanted to know how we can repeal it, what we can replace it with and exactly how detrimental it will be to small businesses. The answer is that Congress can repeal and replace this bill - but that will take real change in 2010. Ideally, I'd like to see us replace it with a more affordable, patient-centered solution that expands access and continues to cover pre-existing conditions. I've introduced a bill called the Siding With America's Patients (SWAP) Act that does just that.

When it comes to the implications on small businesses - the backbone of America's economy - the repercussions are frightening. Small-business owners will face fines of up to \$500,000 if they do not provide health care coverage to their employees, and they will be burdened with mountains of paperwork. It cannot be just any kind of health care plan, either,

but the one a Washington bureaucrat chooses for the business owners to provide. It seems like a no-brainer, but when the unemployment rate lingers around 10 percent, we should give small-business owners incentives to hire more employees, not punish them.

Another popular concern shared by many of those in attendance at the town-hall meetings was how exactly we can curb Washington's spending habit. I was pleased that attendees pushed this issue and asked for specific details on ways we can cut down. A few examples I would like to see include:

- c Eliminate the new, non-reformed welfare program, to save \$2.5 billion a year.

- c Reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac - the two mortgage giants to which taxpayers are on the hook - to save \$30 billion.

- c Sell excess federal property that the government does not need, to save \$15 billion.

- c Prohibit hiring 14,500 new Internal Revenue Service agents to enforce the government health care bill, to save \$5 billion to \$10 billion over 10 years.

- c Stop funding promotional signs for stimulus projects, to save tens of millions of dollars.

I also support a budget, H.Con.Res. 281, that would achieve surpluses in 2019 and 2020 and improve the budget outlook in every single year. We would achieve this by returning spending levels to an amount less than they were in 2008 and keeping spending at this level until the budget is balanced in 2019. Implementing a balanced-budget amendment is another way to prohibit spending that exceeds total receipts for the year.

The days of Congress spending far more than it can afford must end, and these are a few serious policy ideas that would end them. It will take strong support for real cuts and sacrifices so this great nation remains afloat fiscally for the sake of our children and grandchildren.

As we move forward, I encourage all Americans to continue to offer their ideas on how finally to address this reckless and dangerous spending that eventually will cripple our great nation. Two great ways to offer suggestions are through AmericaSpeakingOut.com and [YouCut](http://YouCut.com) - two new interactive forums designed to give Americans a voice in Congress to share policy ideas and wake up Washington.

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